

We claim:

- 1 1. A method for analyzing one or more user's communication messages which contain
2 communications from a plurality of user contacts, the method comprising:
3 accessing a plurality of communication messages; and
4 processing the plurality of communication messages, wherein the processing of the
5 plurality of communication messages includes:
6 determining the identity of the plurality of user contacts;
7 assigning rankings to each of the plurality of user contacts based on the plurality
8 of communication messages; and
9 determining relationships which may exist between contacts and between the one
10 or more users and the contacts user/contact relationships.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein contacts which engage in frequent communications with
2 the user are assigned higher rankings and contacts which engage in less frequent
3 communications with the user are assigned lower rankings.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein contacts which engage in more recent communications
2 with the user are assigned higher rankings and contacts which engage in less recent
3 communications with the user are assigned lower rankings.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the communication messages are at least one of
2 electronic mail messages, voicemail messages, instant messages, telephone logs and facsimiles.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein processing the plurality of communication messages
2 includes:
3 assigning higher priority to contacts who engage in reciprocal communications with the
4 user.

- 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein processing the plurality of communication messages
2 includes:
3 determining if a contact has engaged in reciprocal communications with the user.
4
- 1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
2 assigning higher priority to contacts who engage in frequent reciprocal communications
3 with the user.
4
- 1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein processing the plurality of communication messages
2 includes:
3 inferring relationships between two or more contacts based on the mentioning of the
4 contacts within the communications.
5
- 1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the relationships are inferred between contacts based on
2 the mentioning of contacts within one or more communication message headers.
3
- 1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein processing the plurality of communication messages
2 includes:
3 employing voice recognition techniques to convert voicemail messages to text in order to
4 extract contact information from the communication messages.
5

1 11. A method for processing user communication files to determine identities of contacts
 2 within the communication files, to prioritize the relative importance of the contacts identified and
 3 to establish any relationships between the contacts, the method comprising:
 4 receiving a plurality of communication files, wherein the communication files include a
 5 plurality of different contacts;
 6 reviewing the plurality of communication files to determine contact identities, contact
 7 priorities and relationships; and
 8 providing an analysis of the communication files, wherein the analysis provides the
 9 identities of contacts identified in the communication files, the relative importance of contacts
 10 relative to one another and any relationships between two or more contacts.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein reviewing the plurality of communication files
 2 includes:
 3 determining whether the communication files are unsolicited communications or
 4 responsive to communications initiated by the user.
 5

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein reviewing the plurality of communication files
 2 includes:
 3 determining which contacts are co-mentioned within the communication files.
 4
 5

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein if two or more contacts are co-mentioned with two of
 2 more communication files, the two or more contacts are determined to be related.

1 15. The method of claim 11, wherein reviewing the plurality of communication files
 2 includes:
 3 parsing the plurality of communication files to determine whether prior reciprocal
 4 communications exists between a particular contact and the user.
 5

1 16. The method of claim 11, wherein the communication files are electronic mail messages.
 2

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the electronic mail messages are identified by the user.

18. A method for identifying a user's potential contacts, prioritizing these potential contacts and determining any relationships between these potential contacts based on a plurality of stored messages, the method comprising:

analyzing the plurality of stored messages which includes:

identifying the potential contacts within the stored messages;

determining the relative importance of the identified potential contacts; and

determining any established relationships between the potential contacts

mentioned in the stored messages; and

receiving from the user approvals of the potential contacts which have been identified and prioritized.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the relative importance of contacts is based on one or more of the frequency of communications between the contacts and the user, the recency of the communications between the contacts and the user and the reciprocity of the communications between the contacts and the user.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the relative importance of contacts is based on the following equation:

$$\text{Importance} = Kx_1 + Lx_2 + Mx_3 + Nx_4,$$

where x_1 = number of messages the user replies to from the originating contact; x_2 = number of messages the user sends to the contact excluding replies; x_3 = number of reply messages from the contact; x_4 = combined total of messages that are not composed by the user in which the contact is mentioned in the cc or to lines, plus messages from the contact that are not replies; and K, L, M and N are constant weightings.